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BVT PARENT NEWSLETTER • FALL 2026

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Welcome Back to ~~School~~ Work

As summer winds down, many students are getting ready to head back to school by picking out school supplies to fill their new backpacks. But our students are also shopping for work boots, scrubs, safety glasses, tool belts, and chef coats as they prepare to return to their future careers and get **BACK TO WORK**.

Michele S. Denise — Principal



Whether stepping into a classroom, shop, laboratory, kitchen, clinic, or construction site, our students will return in the fall ready to learn by putting their hands and minds to work.

Each new school year is another opportunity to build skills, gain experience, and take one step closer to becoming skilled professionals. Returning to school means preparing for life beyond high school, where their learning looks a lot like work.

You know BVT is a different kind of high school. Each day, our students are not just walking into a school; they are walking into a workplace. Our campus is an industrial facility with over 350,000 square feet of machinery, power equipment, and technical labs. We give students an opportunity to work with industry-standard tools and equipment—including welding systems, culinary tools, automotive lifts, and more—under close supervision and strict safety protocols. They are not only expected to be good students, but also to develop into good employees.

Career and technical education (CTE) is about far more than teaching technical skills; it's about preparing students for the workplace. By learning how to weld, repair engines, prepare meals, care for patients, design buildings, or troubleshoot technology, they become dependable, professional employees. Every expectation placed upon them, from dress and behavior to communication and safety, is connected to helping them succeed in the real world.

Professionalism Matters

In any workplace, employees are expected to present themselves appropriately, act and speak respectfully, and understand the standards of their environment. An employee cannot arrive at work in pajamas or clothing that would be considered unsafe or unprofessional and expect that to be acceptable. The same principle applies at BVT. Students are taught that how they arrive to school each day reflects not only themselves, but also their program, their school, and their readiness for future opportunities. Professionalism matters, and it is one of the most important lessons our students will learn.

Our school is unique because students are constantly exposed to real-world possibilities. On any given day, a local employer, a scholarship committee member, a state official, or a business partner may walk through the building. Students never know when they may be observed for a future internship, employment opportunity, recommendation, or scholarship. Because of this, students are encouraged to carry themselves in a manner that demonstrates maturity, pride, and workplace readiness.

However, workplace readiness is not simply about appearance. It is also about behavior, communication, and respect for others. Our students are taught that inappropriate language, disrespectful interactions, or unsafe behavior would not be tolerated in a professional workplace. The same standards must apply in school environments designed to mirror professional settings.

CTE provides students with the opportunities to practice these expectations while still in a learning environment where mistakes can become teachable moments. Just as students are trained in technical skills, they are also trained in professionalism, accountability, and interpersonal communication.

Meeting Expectations

This year, our Student Handbook has a new introduction page featuring two standards of operation: *Student in Good Standing* and *Workplace Readiness & Professionalism*, which mirror the behaviors valued in professional workplaces.

- **Student in Good Standing:** As a "student in good standing," your teen must meet our academic, attendance, behavioral, and administrative expectations. This is essential for them to participate in extracurricular activities, athletics, on-campus parking, field trips, internships, and Co-Op.

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- **Workplace Readiness & Professionalism:** Through our "workplace readiness and professionalism" curriculum, we prepare your teen for success within the workforce, post-secondary education, and community life. It is our mission to instill professional habits that promote student success beyond graduation.

We understand that students are still learning and growing. There will be times when they make poor choices or fail to meet expectations, but those moments become opportunities for guidance, conversation, and growth. Teachers, counselors, and administrators work together to reinforce workplace standards, including dress, safety, and respect, so that students gradually understand what it means to conduct themselves professionally. The goal is not simply compliance with school rules but rather helping them develop habits that lead to long-term career success.

Ready for the Real World

How do we know when a student is ready for success in the real world? We observe them each day—in our classrooms, shops, hallways, cafeteria, and during after-school activities—and ask key questions about their behavior. Are they actively:

- Behaving professionally?
- Demonstrating workplace safety?
- Treating people respectfully?

We continue to teach and reinforce these skills to prepare your teen—and all our students—for personal and professional success, fulfilling both the trust you placed in us and the commitment we made together when you and your teen chose BVT.

While our curriculum is designed to prepare your teen for life beyond high school, technical ability alone does not guarantee career success. Employers are seeking out individuals like our graduates, who are reliable, respectful, safe, adaptable, and professional.

By working together and reinforcing these expectations at home and at school, we help your teen understand that success begins long before they enter the workforce. It begins with the choices they make each day—how they carry themselves, treat others, and approach their responsibilities. As your teen walks back through our doors this fall ready to learn, ready to grow, and ready to begin another year, we look forward to welcoming them back to work!



Biotech Curricula Transformed

Students Benefit From Grant-Funded Tools

We're proud to be a recipient of the National Anti-Vivisection Society (NAVS) BioLEAP Classroom Grant. This competitive award allowed us to purchase 10 life-size rat models for our Biotechnology program, eliminating the need for traditional animal dissection while equipping students with modern, humane learning tools.

The male and female rat models are detailed anatomical replicas designed specifically for educational use. Each model features interchangeable reproductive systems, detachable organs—including the heart, lungs, liver, and intestines—and a numbered key to support student learning. These tools allow students to thoroughly explore anatomy without using real animals.

"The reusable models are cost-effective, humane, and easy to manage," said Biotechnology Instructor Zoë Army, M.S. "They give students early exposure to animal anatomy without the pressure of a full dissection. This approach supports engagement while fostering curiosity about careers where lab animals may play a role."

Sophomores in our Biotechnology program responded positively to the new tools:

"I liked the models more than if we had an animal dissection, which is rather off-putting," said Fiona Comeau. "I gained a lot of useful information about rat anatomy using the model."

"The model made identifying anatomy less stressful and more interactive," added MacKenzie Moran. "It encouraged discussion and participation, and I would recommend continuing to use them in future classes."

As part of the grant agreement, recipients must submit a video demonstrating the models in use. This created a valuable opportunity for collaboration with seniors, Logan Didio and Joseph Bache, from our Design & Media Production program, who produced a video for NAVS highlighting the impact of the grant.

"It was exciting to contribute to this initiative and use our shop skills to support humane science education," said Logan.



Joseph said, "It was a great experience to select equipment and prepare interview questions that clearly communicated the purpose of the grant, while keeping students comfortable on camera."

Ella Drumheller reflected on her experience. "The interview gave me a chance to think about what I learned using the rat model and how it applies to our biotechnology work," she said. "The model reduced the anxiety of traditional dissection while building my confidence and understanding of anatomy."

View the completed video at **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/bvtinthenews**.



What's Your Game Plan?

An Academic & Vocational Collaboration

Our teachers often say that nothing is more rewarding than seeing their students engaged, both in academic classrooms and vocational shops, as they develop the skills, confidence, and motivation to succeed in their chosen fields. It's no surprise that when opportunities for collaboration arise, our staff and students eagerly embrace them.

In the classic board game *The Game of Life*, players must choose whether to begin a career or go to college. While each path offers advantages in the game, real-life decisions about a student's future are rarely so simple. When it comes to helping your teen navigate their career choices and plan for a life after graduation, there are more than two paths to consider.

With so many possibilities, the best path may not be immediately clear. To support students in exploring their options and developing a post-secondary plan, they are introduced to a variety of career pathways through Career Enrichment classes. These experiences encourage students to discover what interests them—and just as importantly, what doesn't. Through career exploration activities and guided reflection, students build a strong foundation for informed decision-making.

Recently, students in our Design & Media Production program collaborated with Career Enrichment Instructor Mr. Jerry Polselli in creating a BVT-inspired version of *The Game of Life*. Juniors Ava Bazinet and Nicolette Paradis created the initial design, while seniors Alexa Ladd and Jake Thibault customized the game to meet Career Enrichment's specific needs. They met with Mr. Polselli several times throughout the process, which helped them explore how different career interests could unfold across a range of post-secondary pathways within the game.

To bring the project to life, the game boards were printed in our Design & Print Center by Mr. Tom Mayo, while students in the Painting & Design Technology program assisted with applying adhesive vinyl. The games are now a fun addition to our Career Enrichment curriculum.



Jake, reflected on the experience. "The creative process is arduous yet rewarding. Elevating someone else's idea brings even greater satisfaction, allowing you to shine a light on both the original creator and the creation itself. Over several months, Alexa and I redesigned a game board inspired by *The Game of Life*. We were tasked with adapting the gameplay, content, and overall design to guide students in exploring a variety of career paths. This, in turn, helps them understand the importance of decision-making and financial literacy as they prepare for their careers."

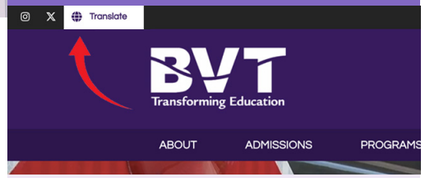
Through projects like this, students gain valuable real-world experience working with clients, collaborating, and bringing creative ideas to life. More importantly, they are reminded that when planning for the future, there are many possible paths—and with the right preparation, they can develop a game plan of their own.

CALENDAR
2026 – 2027

To help keep you up-to-date on important school information and events, visit our Important Dates page at: **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/importantdates**.

Aug 20	Freshmen Orientation Day 1 Freshmen Cookout – 5:00 p.m.
Aug 21	Freshmen Orientation Day 2
Aug 24	1st Day of Classes for All Students Fall Sports Tryouts Begin
Aug 25 & 26	School Pictures
Sept 4	NO SCHOOL
Sept 7	Labor Day – NO SCHOOL
Sept 17	Academic Curriculum Night for Grades 9 & 11 – 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Sept 24	Academic Curriculum Night for Grades 10 & 12 – 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Sept 30	Teacher In-Service – 7:45 a.m. Student Late Start – 10:30 a.m.
Oct 12	Columbus Day – NO SCHOOL
Oct 19 – 23	Spirit Week
Oct 23 – 24	Homecoming Festival
Nov 1	Senior Yearbook Biography, Portraits, & Baby Pictures Submission Deadline
Nov 11	Veterans Day – NO SCHOOL
Nov 12	Annual Admissions Open House – 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Nov 13	First Trimester Ends
Nov 19	Vocational Curriculum Night for Grade 9 – 5:30 to 8:00 p.m.
Nov 25	Early Release – 11:00 a.m.
Nov 26 & 27	Thanksgiving Break – NO SCHOOL

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.



All Are Welcome

Our website provides a "digital front door" to learn all about BVT and the numerous resources we offer. But they are only helpful if they're fully accessible to all. In keeping with our mission to create a positive learning community built on respect and kindness, we continually strive to be accessible to all by building a website that features a language translation icon in the upper left-hand corner of the homepage. Paste any URL from this newsletter into a browser, and it will take you to our website. Click on the translation icon and our entire website changes to your preferred language. Happy browsing!

the Compass

BVT SCHOOL COUNSELING NEWS • FALL 2026

Welcome to ***the Compass***, our school counseling noteworthy news source. Our team of compassionate counselors are here to guide and support you and your teenager on their educational journey. We're dedicated to fostering the academic, career, and social-emotional wellbeing of your teen to promote individual talents, and a curiousity for learning as they reach their full potential and become career, college, and life ready. Together, we can help you chart their course.



Rise & Shine

With the start of the school year, you might be inspired to use those upbeat, urgent phrases your own parents said at the start of a school day: "Rise and shine" or "Time to get ready." These reminders help move teens from sleep to get-up-and-go, alongside encouragement like "Have a great day" and "Don't forget your backpack." Over time, with guidance and consistency, these parental nudges help teens learn how to care for themselves independently.

A new school year offers a natural reset and fresh start with new clothes, a haircut, or updated school supplies. This back-to-school "glow-up" isn't about perfection, chasing trends, or fitting in. At its core, routine and self-care are about helping your teen step into the new year feeling grounded, capable, and confident in who they are.

One often-overlooked way teens build confidence is through daily routines. How they care for and present themselves each day can have a meaningful impact on their mental health. Small, consistent habits provide structure, reduce anxiety, support emotional regulation, and boost self-esteem. Over time, these routines can positively affect mood, behavior, and overall confidence.

Create Healthy Habits

Consistent hygiene routines are about more than cleanliness; they are closely connected to emotional well-being and self-worth. Showering, brushing teeth, using deodorant, and wearing clean clothes help create structure and a sense of normalcy. It also fosters self-compassion, strengthens self- worth, builds social confidence, and makes us more approachable.

We also recognize that many teens, especially those managing anxiety, depression, ADHD, or other mental health challenges, may find basic self-care routines overwhelming at times. Encouraging and modeling healthy habits reinforces the idea that taking care of your body is a form of self-respect. Each habit sends a powerful message: I matter enough to take care of myself. Over time, those messages help strengthen emotional resilience.

> *"At its core, routine and self-care are about helping your teen step into the new year feeling grounded, capable, and confident in who they are.*

Fit for the Occasion

Consistent adult modeling sends a powerful message. When teens understand what clothes are appropriate for different settings, they often feel more comfortable and confident navigating new or demanding environments. Feeling put together can lead to subtle but meaningful shifts: standing a little taller, making eye contact, and participating more confidently. When your teen feels their clothing fits the occasion, they're often less distracted and can focus on learning, participating, and connecting with others. These changes can influence how others respond, reinforcing a cycle of confidence and connection.

Talk through clothing choices for school, including academics, shop, PE, and extracurricular activities, versus home or social settings. Discuss how to balance comfort, practicality, and personal style. Encourage your teen to manage their laundry and plan outfits the night before to help reduce morning stress and support long-term responsibility. Some teens may even enjoy identifying a few reliable "go-to" outfits or a simple weekly rotation of their favorite looks.

Supporting Your Teen

Conversations about hygiene, clothing, and presentation can be sensitive during the teen years, when independence and identity matter deeply. How these conversations happen is just as important as what is said. The goal is not to control choices, but to guide and support teens in building habits that help them feel confident and prepared.

Start with curiosity: "What helps you feel most successful at school?" Focus more on how things feel than how they look. Emphasize confidence and readiness rather than appearance. Set clear yet supportive expectations for hygiene, modesty, and school-appropriate clothing, while still allowing room for personal expression.

Sporty's Closet provides our students with access to hygiene products and gently used clothing. If your teen could benefit from this support, or if you would like to make a donation, this school-based resource can be accessed confidentially through your teen's counselor.

Glowing-Up

As teens prepare to return to school, practices like good hygiene and dressing with intention send a powerful message: "I'm ready. I'm capable. I can show up." When teens feel prepared, comfortable, and confident, life often feels more manageable, engaging, and hopeful—and their best selves are better able to shine through.



Exploring College?

As your teen prepares for life after high school, you may explore a variety of post-secondary options. If that includes college, we understand that planning can feel both exciting and overwhelming. Understanding the process early on can help you provide meaningful emotional, and practical support as they navigate this important transition.

Senior Parents: In September, please keep an eye on your e-mail for information related to the college application process, including:

- Completing & submitting applications
- Sending SAT/ACT scores, if applicable
- Financial aid forms and timelines
- Transcript requests and procedures
- Scholarship opportunities

On **Tuesday, October 20th**, join the counselors for a virtual College Financing Seminar hosted by MEFA, which will focus on understanding the cost of college and the financial aid process, including:

- Applying for financial aid
- How financial aid decisions are made
- Financial aid award letters
- How you can pay your share of college costs
- What free resources are available

Junior Parents: Join the counselors on **Thursday, November 5th** for a virtual College Exploration & Junior Process Workshop, which will cover:

- Creating a college list
- SAT/ACT Exam(s), prep, and registration
- Senior course selection
- Application type and timelines
- Selecting recommenders
- College essay basics
- Preparing for college athletics

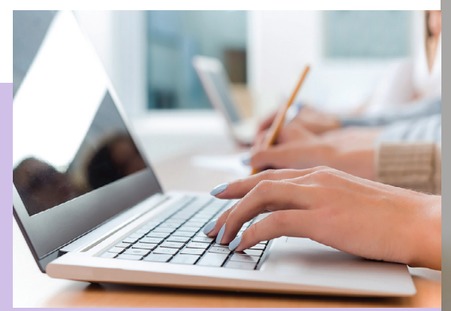
While these supports are designed for families considering college, we guides students in thoughtfully planning for all post-secondary pathways. To learn more visit: **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/careerplanning**.

Add/Drop Policy

Is your teen feeling unsure about their schedule for the new school year?

- Back to school jitters are normal and expected when trying new classes.
- Talk with your teen about their concerns and encourage them to give classes a fair try.
- Consider getting the teacher's perspective before allowing changes.
- Note that students may not change courses based on teacher preference; transfers are made to the section with the most available seats.
- Our Add/Drop period runs from **Tuesday, September 8th** to **Friday, September 18th**, allowing students time to test their schedules before courses are finalized and documented on transcripts.
- Except in rare extenuating circumstances, course changes are not permitted after the Add/Drop deadline.

To learn more about our Add/Drop Policy visit: **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/adddroppolicy**.



CALENDAR
2026 – 2027

Parents, keep your teenager up-to-date on all our school counseling events, deadlines, and workshops.

Aug 24–28	Sophomores: Meet Your Counselor
Aug 26	Freshmen: Meet Your Counselor
Sept 8	Seniors: College Application Process Workshop
Sept 8	Academic Course Add/Drop Begins
Sept 18	Academic Course Add/Drop Deadline
Sept 21	Seniors: Financial Aid Lesson
Sept 28	Thanksgiving & Holiday Drives Begin
Oct 1	FAFSA Opens for College-Bound Seniors
Oct 20	Seniors: MEFA College Financing Seminar
Oct 26	Juniors: Depression Review Lesson
Oct 27	Juniors: Depression Screening
Nov 5	Junior Parents: College Exploration & Application Process Workshop
Nov 9–13	Juniors: College Planning Workshop
Nov 19 & 20	Thanksgiving Drive Pick-up

NOTE: All dates are subject to change.

Stay Informed & Engaged

ParentSquare, our all-in-one communication platform, allows us to share announcements and updates with you and your teen in one secure place. Parents are automatically enrolled using their PowerSchool e-mail address. Download the app, log in, and customize your preferences to stay informed and engaged.

Assessments

MCAS, AP, SAT, PSAT, oh my! Keeping track of all the exams and requirements can be challenging. No worries. Here is a sneak peek at the fall schedule:

Aug 22	Seniors: SAT Exam
Aug 24	Juniors: PSAT Open Registration
Sept 12	Seniors: SAT Exam
Sept 19	Seniors: ACT Exam
Oct 3	Seniors: SAT Exam
Oct 17	Seniors: ACT Exam
Nov 7	Seniors: SAT Exam
Dec 5	Seniors: SAT Exam
Dec 12	Seniors: ACT Exam

Visit: **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/assessments** for more assessments and registration information.



Caring Makes A Difference

Our Students Are Qualified & Ready To Serve

Dedicating one's career to caring and saving others is not easy. It requires a special type of selflessness and strength, and only the bravest among us can do it. That's why we gathered—students, families, and staff—on May 13th, to celebrate the members of the Class of 2027 in our Health Services program at their Nursing Assistant & Healthcare Professional Pinning Ceremony. The event recognized students who successfully completed the Nursing Assistant program, as well as those who demonstrated dedication, compassion, and commitment while preparing for careers in healthcare.

The ceremony highlighted the hard work and perseverance required to enter the healthcare field. Students completed rigorous coursework, hands-on clinical training, and certification requirements designed to prepare them for real-world patient care. Their achievements reflect not only academic success but also a commitment to serving others with professionalism and empathy.

A pinning ceremony holds a special meaning in the healthcare profession. Traditionally, newly certified nurses and healthcare professionals receive a pin to symbolize their transition from student to caregiver. For a Certified Nursing Assistant, the pin represents competence, ethical responsibility, and readiness to provide compassionate care to patients and their families when they are most vulnerable.

Much like graduation, the pinning ceremony is considered a rite of passage in healthcare education. Receiving the pin signifies that students have gained the knowledge, skills, and confidence needed to begin their professional journey. Wearing the pin proudly states, "I've been trained. I'm qualified. I'm ready to serve."

The evening also celebrated the caring spirit that defines the healthcare profession. Faculty members recognized students for their dedication to learning, teamwork, and willingness to support others, qualities that will make a meaningful difference in the lives of future patients.

Congratulations to all of our Health Services students who were recognized and pinned during the ceremony. Our Health Services team is proud of the Class of 2027 and their accomplishments. They looks forward to seeing them make a positive impact in their communities and in their future healthcare careers.





Bus Schedule

With the start of school around the corner, safely transporting your teen to and from school is a top priority. In partnership with our transportation provider, we'll be following strict transportation regulations to ensure the safety of all students and drivers. For the most up-to-date bus schedule, visit **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/busroutes** throughout the fall.

Spreading Good Cheer

The holiday season is a time to come together, give thanks, and share kindness. Our Student Council is excited to help spread hope and joy among our BVT families by hosting our annual Thanksgiving and Holiday Drives. These cherished traditions offer meaningful ways to support one another and strengthen our sense of community.

Whether your family would like to lend a helping hand or could benefit from a little extra good cheer, we invite you to take part and help us make spirits bright this holiday season. To participate, please contact us by **Monday, November 2nd**. For more information, visit our website at: **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us/givingback**.

BVT

Blackstone Valley Regional Vocational Technical High School
65 Pleasant Street, Upton, MA 01568
508-529-7758
www.valleytech.k12.ma.us

Link Up...

As a Massachusetts Green School, BVT fosters open conservation. In that spirit, parents are reminded that all resources — school year calendar, lunch menus, daily announcements, bus routes, and mandatory forms — are available at **www.valleytech.k12.ma.us**. Be sure to take advantage of PowerSchool, the software that allows you access to your child's assignments and schedule. If you're unable to access our website, contact the main office at **508-529-7758**.

In addition to this newsletter and our robust website content, our social media sites will give you an opportunity to connect and engage with us. Join in on the conversation by following us on X: **@BVTHighSchool** and Instagram: **@bvt_highschool**.